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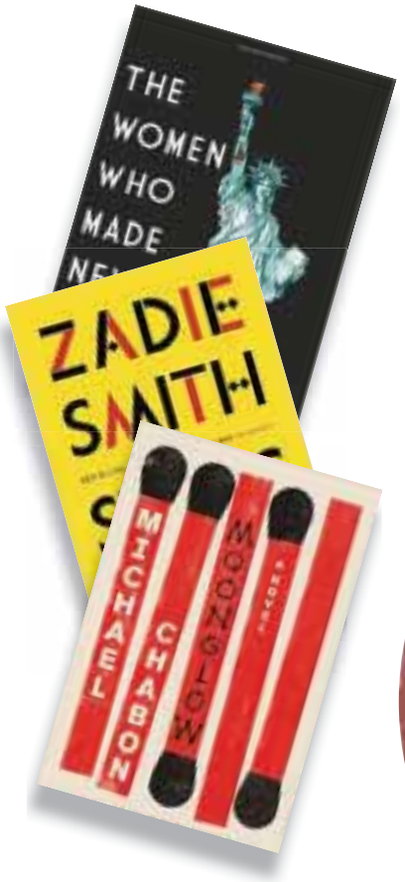

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We have 21 gift ideas for everyone on your list, from your dog-obsessed bestie to your own kid. 30-32

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1. What is a New York University report suggesting as an alternative means of transportation in the city?

2. How many interceptions does Eli Manning need to equal his total from both 2014 and 2015?

3. What animated film did "Collateral Beauty" actor Edward Norton do voice work on this year?

3 things you need to know

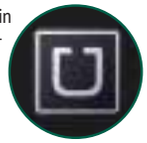
EX-CIA CHIEF SAYS TRUMP RISKS BLAME FOR ATTACK IF HE SKIPS BRIEFINGS

Former CIA director Leon Panetta said on Wednesday that President-elect Donald Trump risked being blamed after any potential attack on the United States if he refused to receive more regular intelligence briefings. U.S. officials told Reuters that Trump is receiving an average of one presidential intelligence briefing a week - far fewer than most of his recent predecessors — but that his deputy Mike Pence gets briefings around six days a week. Panetta, a former Democratic Congressman who served as CIA director and defense secretary in President Barack Obama's first term, told the Arab Strategy Forum, a conference sponsored by the government of Dubai, that Trump's aversion "can't last." REUTERS

ASHLEY MADISON OWNER TO PAY $1.66M TO SETTLE FTC CASE

2 The owner of hacked infidelity website Ashley Madison will pay $1.66 million to settle an investigation by the U.S. Federal Trade Commission and several U.S. states into lax data security and deceptive practices, the company and authorities said on Wednesday. The remainder of a $17.5 million settlement was suspended based on privately-held Ruby Corp.'s inability to pay, the office of New York Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman said in a statement. The company first disclosed it was the target of an FTC investigation in a Reuters interview in July. The agreement follows investigations by the FTC, 13 states and the District of Columbia, which found the company had lax security practices in place at the time of the July 2015 breach. REUTERS

UBER LAUNCHES SELF-DRIVING CAR FLEET IN SAN FRANCISCO



3 Uber has rolled out its self-driving car fleet in its hometown of San Francisco, despite lacking the proper permit that state regulators say is required. Starting Wednesday, riders who request an UberX, one of the company's budget ride options, may be matched with a self-driving Uber. It is unclear how many of these cars Uber has in San Francisco. Launching the program kicked off a battle with the California Department of Motor Vehicles, which said on Tuesday that Uber does not have a permit to test autonomous vehicles on California roads, and demanded the company follow the permitting process that is in place. "Twenty manufacturers have already obtained permits to test hundreds of cars on California roads. Uber shall do the same," the agency said in a written statement. REUTERS

Deborah Hayden organizing volunteers for the Harlem explosions in 2015. AMERICAN RED CROSS

2016 was an unprecedented year of disasters, say American Red Cross officials

Teams were deployed from around the country for fires, floods, shootings and hurricanes.

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From Hurricane Matthew to a bombing in Manhattan's Chelsea neighborhood, 2016 was an exceptionally challenging year for the American Red Cross.

"We've had a real spike in major disasters around the country," Josh Lockwood, CEO of the American Red Cross Greater New York Region, told Metro. "This was a year that really stretched us."

Not only did the organization respond to more than 2,000 disasters in the New York region, but they deployed teams from the Greater New York Region chapter to 50 percent more disasters in other states, such as the Pulse nightclub shooting in Orlando, where they provided specialized support including mental health professionals for those grappling with the crisis. And the flooding in Louisiana and South Carolina this summer was one of the biggest and most expensive efforts they've ever made in the U.S. — volunteers came from all 50 states.

Sometimes the situation is so extreme that the local teams can't sustain the prolonged aid required and the Red Cross has to call in their best from other areas of the country.

Among the best is Deborah Hayden, a mother of four from Long Island, a nurse, and a Red Cross volunteer who has been to more than 20 nationally declared disasters since she became a volunteer in 2010.

"What we're able to do as volunteers is sit one on one and dig deep into what is your biggest concern, what is your biggest need," Hayden told Metro. In the case of the mudslide in Yonkers last year every person affected in Section 8 subsidized housing had medical concerns.

> *"For our mission, we are motivated to alleviate suffering every day."*
>
> Lockwood

"I just know what needs to be done. … By midnight everyone was tended to and taken to a hotel to get a good night's sleep."

Every incident "is always completely different, which is what I love about it. When you come to a disaster zone, you have to figure out what is the situation, what is the effect on the community and quickly find out what the gaps are and what the needs are," she said.

During the summer, Hayden was sent to Baton Rouge for the Louisiana flooding. She cared for 1,600 people in a shelter. "That intimidates people, the vastness of a shelter situation," she said. While there, she encountered an elderly woman with Alzheimer's disease who was crying and lying in a fetal position. But with Hayden's personal approach, she was soon dancing with the woman to her favorite music, smooth jazz.

Even when Hayden can't physically be on site, she is there through the Red Cross' new virtual support system, so she can help connect people with the resources they need.

You don't have to have a medical background to be a valuable volunteer; the Red Cross has needs for more than 30 kinds of roles and skill sets — or no skills at all.

"It's difficult to describe in words how valuable Debbie is," Lockwood said. "Not only does she have that skill set, she also has that essential humanitarian spirit.

"We have an awesome challenge to be in every community, every day, 356 days a year.

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Calculate your holiday tips using real New York City doormen data

NYC doormen data was compiled to create an online tool to calculate holiday tips.

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See how much you should tip the doorman this year. FLICKR CREATIVE COMMONS

"It's important to remember that holiday tipping is truly about saying thank you. With a little creativity you can accommodate everyone on your list this year without blowing your budget."
EmilyPost.com

For apartment dwellers, the holidays mean more than getting tipsy at parties — it means tips for those that help us out during the year — from doormen to dog walkers.

Even if you don't have a dog, at the very least, you will need to tip your super.

Though your super or doorman may appreciate the same snazzy tie that you got your father, he would rather get cold, hard cash this time of year.

But how much should you give? Agents at technology-based real estate startup TripleMint spoke to more than 100 doorman around Manhattan, from downtown to uptown, to compile a digital tipping calculator **(http://triplemint.com/tips)**.

The tool is broken down into the following categories: rent vs. own; apartment size; length of living in apartment; building size; use of building staff; and type of tipper.

If you rent a one-bedroom in a building with 50 or less units, lived in the place for two years or less, only use your building staff occasionally and are on a budget then you should tip your super, concierge or doorman about $50 to $65 this year.

For those who really can't spare any extra cash this year, Emily Post suggests homemade gifts.

"It's important to remember that holiday tipping is truly about saying thank you. With a little creativity you can accommodate everyone on your list this year without blowing your budget," Emily Post.com says.

No matter the gift, it should come with a "short handwritten note of appreciation," Emily Post also suggests. If you tip regularly, a note or small gift should be enough.

NYC pays $600 nightly to house homeless in Times Square hotels

New York's Department of Homeless Services is paying nearly twice the going room rate for a night at the Waldorf Astoria to house the homeless in Times Square hotels.

The city is paying more than $600 a night to ensure that some of its homeless are taken off the streets, for a total nightly cost of about $400,000, according to a report released by city Comptroller Scott Stringer Wednesday.

The report comes after two young sisters died in "cluster housing" in the Bronx from burns caused by a burst radiator valve in their apartment. Cluster housing combines housing for homeless and non-homeless families.

In November 2015, DHS placed 324 homeless families in city hotel rooms. By October, that number had leapt to 2,069, investigators said, adding that average hotel bills rose from $163 to $194.

Stringer revealed that the city has booked 425,000 hotel rooms since last November, at a cost of more than $72.9 million. He urged the city to find "a comprehensive, transparent road map to solve this extraordinary crisis."

Another de Blasio critic, former NYC councilwoman Christine Quinn, said the mayor needs to have a frank conversation with New Yorkers and address what makes families homeless in the first place. And she has the solution.

"The only way to do that is to open more appropriate shelters — tier II in the case of families," she said. "This is not about 'three hots and a cot.' This is not about how quickly we get people out. This is about making sure the women and children never have to return to shelters again."

Tier II shelters are shelters that follow state guidelines providing private rooms and access to services such as recreational services, information and referral services, health services and child care.

Hotels and cluster housing — even if they add features like cameras — can't offer the level of security that a tier II shelter can, said Quinn, the president and CEO of WIN, which provides "holistic solution of safe housing, critical services and ground-breaking programs" for homeless families, according to its website.

PIXABAY

One day, there was a leak in an apartment in a tier II shelter, Quinn recounted. The mother was a work and the daughter, a victim of sexual abuse, was alone. Rather than just sending maintenance to the apartment, Quinn said, WIN provided social workers and familiar faces while the leak was being fixed, showing the traumatized girl that "not all men are bad."

"Trust me," Quinn said, "nothing like that happens in the hotels or the clusters."

De Blasio's office said short-term solutions are all homeless New Yorkers have right now.

"There's no doubt that hotels are not ideal for homeless New Yorkers, but until we get citywide acceptance that more shelters are needed, hotels remain the only short-term option for keeping many New Yorkers off the streets," said de Blasio's spokeswoman, Aja Worthy-Davis.

Kimberly M. Aquilina contributed to this report

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NYPD, Hells Angels at odds after shooting

Police flooded the motorcycle club's East Village headquarters and issued several summonses when bikers refused to answer questions.

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The Hells Angels New York headquarters at 77 E. Third St. WIKIMEDIA

After the Hells Angels kept mum about a shooting outside their East Village headquarters on Sunday, police began putting the squeeze on the motorcycle club, the New York Post reported.

Dozens of NYPD officers descended on the Hells Angels' clubhouse and gave several members summonses on Tuesday. Citations included using planters to obstruct the sidewalk and not displaying motorcycle license plates properly.

"It was done just to f— with them," a source told the Post. "They're not cooperating with the investigation. … We want them to feel our presence and to let them know we are here."

On Sunday morning, David Martinez, 25, was shot when he moved one of several traffic cones the Hells Angels had placed outside their clubhouse at 77 E. Third Street so the car he was a passenger in could move around a cab blocking the street. The club allegedly uses the cones to block off parking spaces for its members.

A fight broke out between several Hells Angels and Martinez and his companions, during which Martinez was shot in the abdomen by a man believed to be a prospective member of the motorcycle club. Martinez underwent surgery for his wounds and is recovering, the Post reported.

"[The Hells Angels] don't own that block, and they have no right to block parking spots for themselves," the source told the paper. "It's a public street."

BRIEF

1-year-old boy dies in apartment complex fire in Brooklyn

A 1-year-old boy was found dead in a fire Wednesday morning on the top floor of an apartment in Brooklyn.

The boy, Ivan Baez, was found unconscious at about 8:30 a.m. after firefighters responded to the fire on the top floor of a building in the Howard Houses public housing complex in Brownsville.

The baby was taken to a local hospital where he was pronounced dead, police said.

Six others who were in the apartment on Mother Gaston Boulevard, including a 32-year-old and 22-year-old man, a 20-year-old woman, 17-year-old girl and an 8-year-old boy, were taken to local hospitals and treated for smoke inhalation and minor injuries.

More than 125 firefighters responded to the fire. The cause of the fire is unclear and the investigation is ongoing.

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ALBO LIBERIS /GENESIS STUDIOS

First design renderings show soaring office tower

The office tower will have 700,000 square feet of leasable space.

A large Downtown Brooklyn development site at 625 Fulton Street is slated to receive one of Brooklyn's largest office buildings. The parcel, bounded by Rockwell Place, Hudson, Fulton, and Lafayette streets, formerly held a drab, seven-story office building which Forest City Ratner razed in 2013. The lot was sold to Brooklyn-based Rabsky Group for $158 million, and a recent article from the Real Deal specifies the developer intends to build a 36-story commercial skyscraper, upwards of 700,000 square feet of leasable space. To garner a tower of that size, Rabsky is in talks with City Planning to take advantage of a plaza bonus.

Avant-garde duo, Albo Liberis, have been commissioned as the architects. The firm recently wrapped up construction on their striking William Vale Hotel in Williamsburg. Published on their webpage are two sets of renderings depicting a slab-shaped office block fronted by a landscaped plaza. One scheme shows a flat-topped tower with a sweeping diagonal prow near its Fulton Street end, while the other shows a mostly-glass monolith that cantilevers over a gracefully curving lobby. Though the parcel directly abuts Ratner's 40-story rental, 80 DeKalb, both depictions show the tower will be freestanding and allow porous pedestrian passage through the block. According to the Real Deal, MPFP is serving as the landscape architect.

With a new crop of inspired towers drafted by top offices such as SHoP, Kohn Pedersen Fox and TEN Arquitectos; and now borough-grown talents Albo Liberis, it seems Downtown Brooklyn is no longer comfortable being known as the hub of architectural backwater. While the borough's skyline never aspired to rival Manhattan's, its pre-war collection of spires, which include the Williamsburgh Saving Bank Tower (One Hanson) and the delightful 75 Livingston, were graceful pinnacles of commerce that conveyed the builders were building to last. Since the mid-century urban renewal schemes supplanted the neighborhood's bustling core however, its architecture has marinated in the doldrums.

In the 1980s and '90s, Forest City Ratner's MetroTech brought in new suburban familiarityto the district that helped the city retain back-office jobs for large Manhattan tenants. In the early 2000's, the Bloomberg Administration hatched a rezoning plan to rejuvenate the area with new office space that would deter tenants from leaving the city altogether. Rather, the rezoning spawned an array of middling residential high-rises that leave no clear impression of what Downtown Brooklyn is or aims to become. Now with several large office towers looming on the horizon, such as One Willoughby Square, 540 Fulton Street and WeWork's Navy Yard building, we can now at least hope for a quirkier Hudson Yards.

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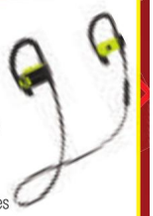

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Democratic lawmakers: Trump's Washington hotel a conflict of interest

U.S. President-elect Donald Trump must divest his luxury Washington hotel in a building leased from the federal government because the arrangement violates conflict-of-interest rules, congressional Democrats said on Wednesday.

The General Services Administration, which manages property owned by the federal government, including the Old Post Office housing the Trump International Hotel, has said the lease would violate federal conflict-of-interest rules once the Republican businessman is sworn in on Jan. 20, according to a letter to the agency from lawmakers.

The letter referred to a Dec. 8 briefing to congressional staffers by a GSA official whom the letter did not name.

The Trump hotel in Washington, D.C. GETTY IMAGES

"The Deputy Commissioner made clear that Mr. Trump must divest himself not only of managerial control, but of all ownership interest as well," Representative Elijah Cummings of Maryland and three other Democrats said in the letter, which was made public on Wednesday.

The hotel is a few blocks from the White House and has become a rallying point for anti-Trump protesters since it opened in September. It is among businesses that could create unprecedented conflicts of interest for Trump, a New York real estate developer and former reality TV star.

Trump's company has not responded to the GSA's concerns about the potential conflict, the Democratic lawmakers said. They asked the agency for documents about the lease, profit and expense projections and legal memos about the conflict of interest.

The hotel lease includes a standard GSA provision barring members of Congress or other elected federal officials — such as the president — from having any part of it. REUTERS

C.E.OH NO!

TOM FOREMAN

Opinion

CNN's Tom Foreman is the author of the book "My Year of Running Dangerously." @tomforemancnn

Week by week, as the inauguration looms, the cabinet for our soon-to-be president, Donald Trump, is taking shape. As predicted, it includes a number of names from the big world of business; folks with years at the helms of major corporations, steering multimillion-dollar deals, and managing global enterprises. Imagine the little Monopoly guy, only without the top hat. Or if you're feeling less charitable, Monty Burns.

And many people are flinging out some version of the following statement as if it is a truth plucked from the tablets of Moses: "Oh, these are great business leaders, and that's just what our country needs!"

Really? The idea that successful businesspeople inherently make good governmental figures is akin to the notion that great running backs will automatically be wonderful point guards. The evidence speaks against it. Part of the problem is that business and government are entirely different things.

The chief goal of business is making money. Sure, any given firm may provide a valuable service, create jobs, even fulfill a role in the destiny of our culture … but the main purpose is still to rake in the green. Now consider some of the chief aims of governments: providing a common defense, a stable currency, justice, education, crime control, public health, environmental safety and on and on. Of course governments use a lot of money, but making it is not job one.

What's more, CEOs often have nearly dictatorial powers while people in top government jobs are substantially limited by laws, regulations, customs, oversight and political realities.

In short, the idea that someone with a successful record in industry is automatically well-suited for a role in government is ludicrous. There may be crossover skills, and certainly some people have spun their business acumen into political gold. Perhaps Mr. Trump's picks will prove to be those exceptional souls, and while I'm at it maybe he will too.

But to borrow from the parlance of the bosses and their golf buddies at the country club: It's not a gimmie.

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Fed raises rates, sees faster pace of increases in 2017

The Federal Reserve raised interest rates by a quarter point on Wednesday and signaled a faster pace of increases in 2017 as the Trump administration takes over with promises to boost growth through tax cuts, spending and deregulation.

The rate increase, regarded as a virtual certainty by financial markets in the wake of a string of generally strong economic reports, raised the target federal funds rate 25 basis points to between 0.50 percent and 0.75 percent. Bond yields and the dollar rose after the rate decision while stocks were mixed with financials and tech the only two sectors to show gains.

"In view of realized and expected labor market conditions and inflation, the committee decided to raise the target range," the central bank's policy-setting committee said in its unanimous statement after a two-day meeting.

Traders work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. GETTY IMAGES

> *"Job gains have been solid in recent months and the unemployment rate has declined."*
> The Fed

"Job gains have been solid in recent months and the unemployment rate has declined," the Fed said, noting that market-based measures of inflation compensation had moved up "considerably."

More significant was a fresh batch of Fed policymaker forecasts that indicated the current once-a-year pace of rate increases will accelerate next year. Markets and the Fed appeared to be close on pricing with Fed futures markets pricing in at least two and possibly three hikes, up from one to two prior to the meeting.

With President-elect Donald Trump planning a simultaneous round of tax cuts and increased spending on infrastructure, central bank policymakers shifted their outlook to one of slightly faster growth, lower unemployment and inflation just under the Fed's 2 percent target.

The Fed's median outlook for rates rose to three quarter-point increases in 2017 from two as of September. That would be followed by another three increases in both 2018 and 2019 before the rate levels off at a long-run "normal" 3 percent. REUTERS

BRIEF

Woman in SC church massacre was spared 'to tell the story,' she testifies

A 72-year-old retired nurse recounted for jurors on Wednesday how she cowered under a table while Dylann Roof killed nine of her fellow worshippers at a historic black church but spared her so she could tell the story of what he had done.

Polly Sheppard was the last person to testify for the prosecution at Roof's federal hate crimes trial in Charleston, South Carolina. After she detailed the bloodshed at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in June 2015, Roof told the judge he did not want to testify and the defense rested its case without calling any witnesses.

Lawyers are set to give their closing arguments on Thursday.

There is little doubt about Roof's guilt. The 22-year-old, a self-described white supremacist, confessed to the crime in a videotaped interview and has offered to plead guilty if prosecutors halt their quest for a death sentence.

The government refused, however, and the penalty phase of Roof's trial will get under way in January if he is convicted of federal hate crimes resulting in death, obstruction of religion and firearms violations.

Sheppard's eyewitness account added to the chilling testimony and evidence jurors will consider. While she was on the stand, jurors heard the tape of her pleading with emergency dispatchers for help after the shootings.

"Please come," she said, describing how a white gunman had shot the church's pastor and others attending a Bible study.

Sheppard, a member of the church's trustee board, was composed while testifying how Roof opened fire after parishioners had closed their eyes in prayer.

She said she thought the sound was something electrical until she heard Felicia Sanders screaming, "He's shooting everybody, Miss Polly!"

Sheppard dived under a table and prayed aloud as the shots rang out, she testified. Roof told her to shut up.

"Have I shot you yet?" Sheppard said he asked her.

When she responded no, Sheppard said Roof told her, "I'm not going to. I'm going to leave you here to tell the story." REUTERS

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Aleppo assault likely a war crime, says UN as evacuation stalls

There were clashes on the ground later in the day, with rebels saying they launched an attack against government forces using suicide car bombs.

Plans to evacuate besieged rebel districts of Aleppo were under threat on Wednesday as renewed airstrikes and shelling rocked the Syrian city in a bombardment the United Nations said "most likely constitutes war crimes."

Iran, one of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's main backers, imposed new conditions on a ceasefire deal, saying it wanted the simultaneous evacuation of wounded from two villages besieged by rebel fighters, according to rebel and U.N. sources.

There was no sign of that happening. Instead airstrikes, shelling and gunfire erupted in Aleppo and Turkey accused government forces of breaking the truce agreed less than a day before. Syrian state television said rebel shelling killed six people.

A ceasefire brokered by Russia, Assad's most powerful ally, and Turkey was intended to end years of fighting in the city, giving the Syrian leader his biggest victory in more than five years of war. The evacuation of rebel-held areas was expected to start in the early hours of Wednesday, but did not materialize.

U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad al Hussein said he was appalled that the deal appeared to have collapsed.

"While the reasons for the breakdown in the ceasefire are disputed, the resumption of extremely heavy bombardment by the Syrian government forces and their allies on an area packed with civilians is almost certainly a violation of international law and most likely constitutes war crimes," he added.

There was no immediate indication when the evacuation of civilians and rebel fighters might take place but a pro-opposition TV station said it could be delayed until Thursday. Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan and Russian leader Vladimir Putin agreed in a phone call to make a joint effort to start the process, Turkish presidential sources said.

There was no sign of Iran's conditions being met. Insurgents fired shells at the two majority-Shi'ite villages from which Tehran wanted wounded to be evacuated, Foua and Kefraya, in Idlib province west of Aleppo, causing some casualties, the British-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said. REUTERS

A view shows Syrian pro-government forces walking in the ancient Umayyad mosque in the old city of Aleppo. GETTY IMAGES

BRIEF

Yahoo discloses new data breach affecting one billion accounts

Yahoo said that it has identified a new breach that occurred in August 2013 and involved data associated with more than one billion user accounts, double the number affected in a different breach disclosed in September.

Yahoo said it believed the latest incident was likely distinct from the breach disclosed in September, when it said information associated with at least 500 million user accounts was stolen in 2014.

The 2014 breach was believed to be the world's biggest known cyber breach by far.

The company, which is being acquired by Verizon Communication Inc (VZ.N) for $4.83 billion, said an unauthorized third party had stolen the data in the latest breach and that it was working closely with law enforcement.

The company said it has not been able to identify the intrusion associated with the theft.

Yahoo said the stolen user account information may have included names, e-mail addresses, telephone numbers, dates of birth, hashed passwords and, in some cases, encrypted or unencrypted security questions and answers. REUTERS

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Prosecutors want jury to hear from slew of Cosby accusers

Cosby faces sexual assault allegations from about 50 women altogether, though the Pennsylvania case is the only criminal prosecution to result.

A slew of women who say Bill Cosby lured them into sexual assaults with promises of friendship or career advice could show that the comedian was a serial predator who preyed on his victims for decades, Pennsylvania prosecutors argued on Wednesday.

Judge Steven O'Neill of the Montgomery County Court of Common Pleas is weighing whether to allow prosecutors to call 13 accusers as witnesses at Cosby's trial next year, in addition to the woman whose allegations of sexual abuse form the basis for the case.

A defense lawyer for the comedian, Brian McMonagle, asserted that the women's claims are "ancient, remote, incredible and uncorroborated" and would rob Cosby of his right to a fair trial.

The two-day hearing, which began on Tuesday, is crucial for both sides. If prosecutors prevail, Cosby would face a parade of trial witnesses describing attacks going back four decades.

If not, Cosby's defense lawyers could focus on undermining just one account: that of Andrea Constand, whose allegations of a 2004 drug-fueled sexual assault led to the Pennsylvania charges.

The lead prosecutor, Kevin Steele, acknowledged that reality on Wednesday.

Bill Cosby, who built a family-friendly image as the star of "The Cosby Show" television comedy, has denied any wrongdoing. GETTY IMAGES

"Without this evidence, we would be forced to rely on what I'm sure will be argued is the uncorroborated testimony of the victim," he told O'Neill.

But McMonagle said the prior accusations were inconsistent and lacking details like specific dates, making it impossible to defend against them.

Cosby's lawyers emphasized that every one of the 13 accusers came forward after Constand and that most are clients of celebrity civil rights lawyer Gloria Allred, who was sitting in the courtroom.

The use of "prior bad act" evidence is typically disallowed to avoid unfairly prejudicing jurors against the defendant based on actions unrelated to the case at hand. But prosecutors can be permitted to introduce such evidence if it shows a clear pattern of behavior.

Steele said the accounts from Constand and the 13 other women share "remarkable similarities." In each case, he said, Cosby targeted young women, established trust and then offered them intoxicants to incapacitate them.

But McMonagle argued the opposite, saying the alleged assaults bore little resemblance to Constand's case based on their locations and the specific allegations. REUTERS

BRIEF

US fines airline $1.6M for violating tarmac delay rule

The Transportation Department fined American Airlines $1.6 million for violating a rule that prohibits long tarmac delays.

The department said it found American had allowed a number of domestic flights to remain on the tarmac for more than three hours without allowing passengers an opportunity to get off the plane. The fine matched the amount that was assessed against Southwest Airlines in 2015 for violating the same rule.

American Airlines spokesman Matt Miller said the company was pleased to have resolved the issue. "It's worth noting that a large portion of the settlement is related to a winter weather event that occurred nearly four years ago in Charlotte," he said.

U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx said the "tarmac rule is meant to prevent passengers from being trapped in aircraft on the ground for hours on end."

Under government rules, U.S. airlines operating aircraft with 30 or more seats are prohibited from allowing domestic flights to remain on the tarmac for more than three hours without giving passengers an opportunity to leave the plane with some limited exceptions. REUTERS

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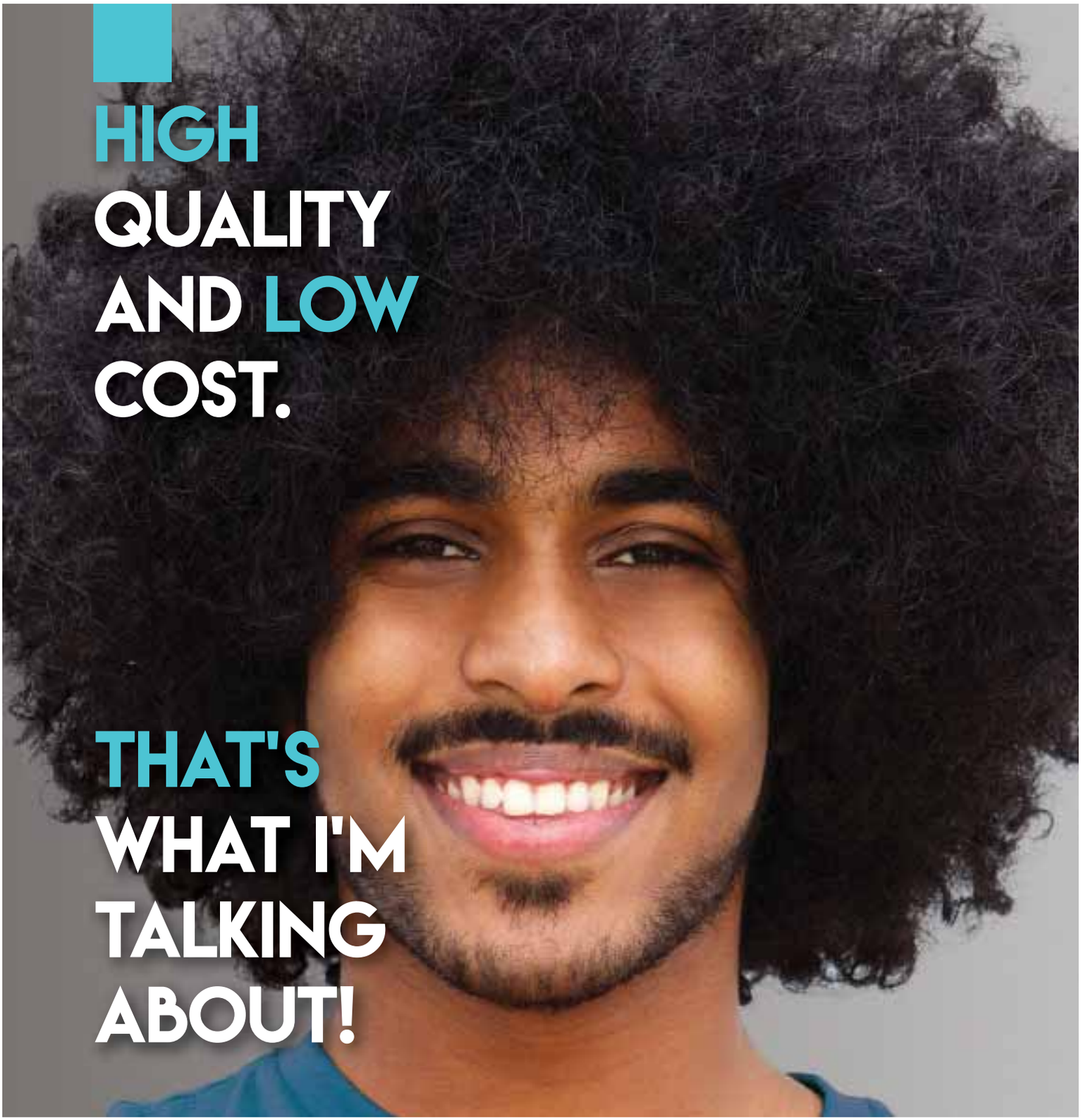

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BRIEF

California adopts first US energy-saving rules for computers

California regulators on Wednesday adopted the nation's first mandatory energy efficiency rules for computers and monitors — devices that account for 3 percent of home electric bills and 7 percent of commercial power costs in the state.

The state Energy Commission said that when fully implemented the industry-backed plan will save consumers $373 million a year and conserve at least as much electricity annually as it takes to power all of San Francisco's homes.

Final approval of the standards at a meeting of the five-member commission in Sacramento capped five years spent developing the rules in collaboration with environmentalists, computer manufacturers and consumer groups The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), one of the environmental groups that helped devise the regulations, said the new standards would cut greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuel combustion in power generation by 700,000 tons a year.

The California standards set benchmarks for machines' overall energy use and leave manufacturers flexibility to choose which efficiency measures are employed to meet the standards - an approach the NRDC says fosters innovation.

The new standards were supported by nearly 40 companies represented by the Information Technology Industry Council (ITIC), including such Silicon Valley giants as HP Inc and Intel Corp .

"This is an industrywide win for us," said Alexandria McBride, ITIC's director of Environment and Sustainability. REUTERS

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Luigi and Mario of Super Mario Bros GETTY IMAGES

Nintendo in risky push with paid Super Mario launch on iPhones

A lot is riding for the Japanese company on Super Mario Run, which is being released in 151 countries and regions on Thursday for iPhone.

Nintendo Co. will make a big push into mobile gaming on Thursday with the launch of the popular Super Mario Bros franchise on the iPhone, a risky bet because users will need to pay upfront, at a time when the gaming market is getting crowded.

Unlike smash-hit Pokemon GO, Super Mario Run is the first game for mobile developed by Nintendo, under a partnership with mobile gaming firm DeNA Co, which means it will enjoy the lion's share of its success or bear the brunt of failure.

While investors are hoping Super Mario Run will be a hit for Nintendo, its decision to charge $9.99 for full access to the game may limit revenues and put its fate at the mercy of loyal Nintendo console-game fans.

Unlike Super Mario Run's upfront charge, global blockbuster titles such as Candy Crush Saga and Angry Birds typically only charge in-game items and power-ups without specific ceilings.

"It is an interesting decision," Andrew Chanin, CEO of PureFunds, a New York-based provider of thematic exchange-traded funds, said of Nintendo's pricing plan. "Players will know what they're getting themselves into when they download the game."

The Mario game is free to download but the free-to-play section is limited to low-level stages. Players control Mario through a series of obstacle courses while collecting coins along the way. At higher levels, players can compete with other players' scores and create their own "kingdom".

"That makes reviews by the hard core fans of the Super Mario series … important, as they will be behind the general opinion on the game that should take shape fairly soon after its release," Takao Suzuki, a Daiwa Securities analyst, said in a note this week.

App analytics firm SensorTower forecasts worldwide gross revenue of over $71 million for Super Mario Run in its first month, just half of the $143 million that Pokemon GO garnered. REUTERS

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SESALI BOWEN
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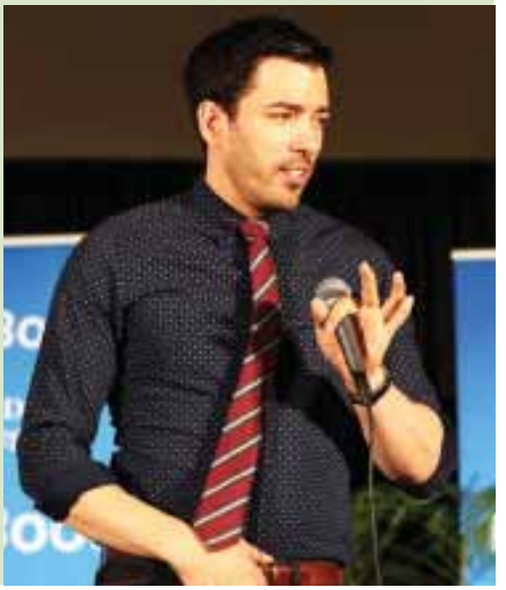
Half of 'Property Brothers' gets engaged

It's been a good week for Drew Scott, one half of HGTV's "Property Brothers." (He's the metrosexual one, in case you get him mixed up with his brother Jonathan.) On Tuesday, Drew proposed to his longtime girlfriend, Linda Phan, at Piano Piano in Toronto, reports People magazine. The 38-year-old had been planning the surprise proposal for weeks, and apparently it was worth it. He gushed about his fiancée, "I've never met another woman like her, and once you do, you want to be with her forever." Drew recorded his own version of Train's "Marry Me" to be played at the restaurant and had a cake decorated with illustrations from Dr. Seuss' "Oh the Places You'll Go," Phan's favorite book, changing the words to "Oh the Places We'll Go." After she said yes, they went to another venue, where friends and family were waiting to party with the happy couple. We're glad to know HGTV isn't all divorce and exorcisms now.



ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

John Mayer posts the shadiest tweet on Taylor Swift's birthday

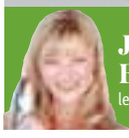
John Mayer has quite the extensive celebrity dating history. Jennifer Aniston, Jessica Simpson and Katy Perry have all had the honor — or misfortune, depending on whom you ask — to call him bae. But it was Taylor Swift who, after their four-month fling ended in 2010, penned a song called "Dear John" blasting the singer for playing "dark, twisted games." It may be that Swift isn't the only one with a bad taste in her mouth. Her birthday was Tuesday, and in a now-deleted tweet, John Mayer called Dec. 13 the "lamest day of the year." He later clarified that the tweet wasn't about his ex, but a fan took a screenshot of the tweet, so it will forever live on the internet, further evidence that John Mayer is probably a jerk.

Double Trouble

Sometimes the only thing better than a hot celebrity is one who looks exactly like him or her. We're not talking about Katy Perry-Zooey Deschanel doppelganger situations, either. These real-life twins have us seeing double in the best possible way. ***Head over to Metro.us for the full list.***

On Viola Davis' great #SeeHer speech

Geek Girl in Hollywood



JENNA BUSCH
legionofleia.com

Last Sunday night, the Broadcast Film Critics Association and the Broadcast Television Journalists Association held the Critics' Choice Awards. This year, we had an award that brought me to tears: the first #SeeHer Award. It's the result of a campaign started by the Association of National Advertisers and its Alliance for Family Entertainment, and it's backed by the White House. It's an effort to eliminate bias against women in advertising and in the media by increasing the "accurate portrayal of girls and women" by 20 percent by 2020.

The award was won by Viola Davis, who was nominated for her role in "How to Get Away with Murder" and who won Best Supporting Actress for her role in "Fences." This woman is beyond accomplished, and she took on an issue that actresses rarely speak about: overcoming the self-consciousness that comes with expectations of beauty.

There were very few dry eyes in the house, at least from my vantage point. We've all been through this. We all know the feeling of looking accomplished and still feeling like we have to lose weight or dress differently. She felt it, too, but she overcame it. I just wanted to share the speech with you.

"It's hard to accept being a role model for women when you're trying to lose weight," Davis said. "But it's true. I've always discovered the heart of my characters, I guess, by asking, 'Why?' When I was handed Annalise Keating [on "Murder"], I said, 'She's sexy, she's mysterious,' you know? I'm used to playing women where I've got to gain 40 pounds and wear an apron, so I said, 'Oh God, I've got to lose weight. I've got to learn how to walk like Kerry Washington in heels. You know, I gotta lose my belly.'

"And then I asked myself, 'Well, why do I have to do all of that?' I truly believe that the privilege of a lifetime is being who you are, and I just recently embraced that at 51." She continued: "I think my strongest power is that at 10 o'clock every Thursday night, I want you to come into my world. I am not going to come into yours. You come into my world and you sit with me, my size, my hue, my age, and you sit and you experience. And I think that's the only power I have as an artist. So I thank you for this award. And I do see her. Just like I see me."

Viola Davis, you are awesome. We all are.

Viola Davis took the stage at the Critics' Choice Awards on Dec. 11 and delivered a helluva speech. GETTY IMAGES

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Edward Norton gets into the holiday spirit

The Oscar-nominee says right now is weirdly perfect for "Collateral Beauty."

MATT PRIGGE
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Edward Norton plays an exec who, in addition to helping a grieving friend (Will Smith), tries to reconnect with his semi-estranged young daughter (Kylie Rogers) in "Collateral Beauty." BARRY WETCHER

Edward Norton doesn't do a lot of feel-good movies. He does heavy cinema. He's a real actor. He'll do comedies, like "Sausage Party." (And "Birdman" is pretty funny.) But something like the warm-hearted "Collateral Beauty" is rare for him. A holiday dramedy, it concerns a businessman (Will Smith) who's become a recluse three years after the death of his young daughter. To snap him out of it, his friends/colleagues (Norton, Kate Winslet and Michael Pena) hire actors (Helen Mirren, Keira Knightley and Jacob Latimore) to pretend to be spiritual beings, who he thinks no one but him can see. Positive (and sometimes comedic) though it is, it's also a stark film about grief, trauma and death.

GETTY IMAGES

It's strange to see a movie this positive about life and the world right now.

I've been saying to people, "If you hated this election cycle, you'll love 'Collateral Beauty.'" [Laughs] There are so many dimensions to the whole experience this year. It's going to take time. And it's still unfolding — that's what's so crazy. We're in this very, very, very strange, new period right now. It's like a veil has been dropped. Sometimes I feel like the Republican party was an 18-wheeler, but the tractor-trailer came off the cab. You have this corporate plutocracy driving all this working class rage, and managing to corral it for a while and hoodwink it, bamboozle it. Then it's like the tractor-trailer came off the cab and went careening down the highway on its own.

This movie is sort of about what we're going through: It's about dealing honestly with pain and grief and death, at a time when we need to be honest with what's going on in the world.

An old friend of mine [Toby Emmerich], who runs the studio making this film, called me and said, "I got Will Smith in this thing, and I really want to pull you together. It's a movie I want to have out for the holidays." As soon as he said "holidays," I said, "You got the wrong guy, Toby! [Laughs] That ain't my bag." He said, "There's a kind of old school 'It's a Wonderful Life' wisdom in this thing." I read it, and I was quite surprised by the very mature wisdom. I actually think my friend was right. I think the underlying message, which is very apt for the end of the year, is that there's a value to remembering that pain and loss are intrinsic parts of life. It's not that you can get through them, but you can have a wider, deeper life because of them.

It's a positive movie about embracing the fact that death is a fact of life.

[Laughs] Exactly. Well, thanks to Trump, we're all probably going to die within the next two years.

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Shay & Ivy

Flatiron's new progressive American restaurant is offering a complimentary glass of wine, because it's been that kind of year. The three-course prix fixe menu includes options like roasted pumpkin toast with a chipotle honey zing, ginger miso-marinated skirt steak and a six-layer chocolate cake for dessert. *$50, 39 W. 24th St.*

Blu on Park

Though this Upper East Side restaurant spanning three floors of a brownstone may look right out of the 1920s, it's the place to catch your family up on the thoroughly modern poke trend. It's among the appetizer options on the Christmas Eve prix fixe menu, which also includes queen-cut prime rib with potato gratin, four-hour braised short ribs and individual housemade apple pies to end. *$79, 116 E. 60th St.*

Flinders Lane

Give your ugly sweater another chance to shine this season over dinner at Flinders Lane, where they're not just welcome but encouraged. The three-course Aussie tasting menu has options like steak tartare with oyster creme to start, lobster mornay and the traditional dessert of pavlova, made with mangoes and passion fruit (it's summer where they come from, go with it). Make sure everyone in your party brings a canned good to donate to Trinity Services — you'll be doing good, and each one is also good for a free drink. *$65, 162 Ave. A, East Village*

Kings County Imperial

Just not that into the Christmas classics? Chef Josh Grinker is serving the same beloved menu of market-driven Chinese fare in Williamsburg, where everything is business as usual on Christmas Eve. Gather up all your fellow holiday orphans for an Imperial feast and dig into chicken dumplings with cinnamon red oil, tea-smoked mu shu duck and an Irish Hawaiian cocktail to really confuse your sense of direction. *20 Skillman Ave., Brooklyn*

Shay & Ivy **OLEG MARCH**

Loring Place **ALIZA ELIAZAROV**

Tessa

This Michelin-recommended upscale neighborhood go-to will be serving some of its comfort food hits like meatballs made with pasture-raised lamb and topped with parmigiano crisps and 2016's most popular chicken, Sasso, cooked under a brick with beech mushroom, spaetzle, dried cherry and apples. *349 Amsterdam Ave., Upper West Side*

Loring Place

ABC Cocina's acclaimed chef Dan Kluger just opened his own restaurant last Saturday, so you can still jump on a reservation for what's sure to become the city's favorite new upscale dinner spot. Trust the chef's long-earned wisdom when you see surprising dishes like wood-grilled broccoli in pistachio-mint sauce and a date, mozzarella, bacon, chili and radicchio pizza. *21 W. Eighth St., Greenwich Village*

Paowalla

Floyd Cardoz's return to the NYC dining scene is nothing short of one of the year's best restaurants. The chef, a native of Goa, is drawing on his heritage to count down to Christmas with a different daily special of modern Indian fare all 12 days like carb-stuffed calamari, seam bream recheado and beef tenderloin roulade. On Dec. 23 and 24, he'll bring the biggest hits back for a tasting menu. *195 Spring St.*

The Seven Fishes antipasto at LaRina Pastificio & Vino **MICHAEL TULIPAN**

Where to eat all Seven Fishes

While a baked ham is traditional Christmas fare for many, Italian-American culture boasts a little more variety. Here are six spots where you can join in on the Feast of the Seven Fishes tradition this year; reservations are encouraged.

Grand Central Oyster Bar & Restaurant

At the warmly lit, vaulted restaurant, executive chef Sandy Ingber will be serving an a la carte Seven Fishes menu for both lunch (from 11:30 a.m.) and dinner (final seating 10 p.m.), including an Italian seafood salad and baccala in the form of a salt cod cake served over Amalfi tomato sauce. Oysters do not appear on the setlist, but if you must, slurp down a few at the bar as a pregame. *Prices vary, Grand Central Terminal*

Faro

If you've yet to try Bushwick's Michelin-starred New American hot spot, known for its handmade pasta and seasonal menu, Christmas Eve will be a treat. Chef Kevin Adey is offering five dishes — with seven fishes — including the likes of uni crudo with aji amarillo and squid and mussels served with Roman-style gnocchi (made without potatoes). *$95, 6-10 p.m., 436 Jefferson Ave.*

Ai Fiori

At Midtown's acclaimed French-Italian fine-dining establishment, you don't have to wait until Christmas Eve to get festive with the fishes. Chef de cuisine Scott Schneider is rolling out his special menu for dinner service beginning Dec. 19. The decadent seven-course meal includes crudo with sturgeon caviar, truffled lobster soup and octopus with sweet potato caponata. *$175, $70 kids under 12, Langham Place Hotel, 400 Fifth Ave.*

LaRina Pastificio & Vino

You're in good hands at this Fort Greene newcomer: Chef Silvia Barban was born in Italy and trained with Gualtiero Marchesi, considered the father of modern Italian cuisine. She's serving fresh-made pasta with many of the dishes, like crabmeat rigatoni and the culinary feat of risotto-stuffed ravioli cooked in fish broth with calamari, scallops and mussels. *$75, brunch (11 a.m.-3:30 p.m.) and dinner (5-11 p.m.), 387 Myrtle Ave.*

The Clam

At this West Village shellfish-centric eatery, chef/owner Mike Price has put together a five-course seafood-studded prix-fixe available Dec. 24 (3-10 p.m.) as well as Christmas Day (3-9 p.m). Enjoy the likes of Wellfleet oysters on the half-shell, lobster chowder, baked clams and more. *$95, 420 Hudson St.*

21 Greenpoint

On Dec. 15, Atlanta chefs Angus Brown and Nhan Le (Octopus Bar, 8 Arm) will join chef Sean Telo to serve a "very extra" Feast of the Eight Fishes at Homer Murray's (yes, he's the son of Bill) much buzzed about eatery along the Greenpoint waterfront. Highlights of the a la carte menu include a geoduck congee and spicy saffron risotto with prosecco. *Prices vary, 21 Greenpoint Ave.*

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If you go

Art After Trump
Dec. 15, 6 p.m.-midnight
Housing Works Bookstore Cafe, 126 Crosby St.
Free, housingworks.org

Art After Trump uses the election as inspiration

Grieve, gain strength and get motivated at this marathon performance.

EVA KIS
@thisiskis
eva.kis@metro.us

The results of this year's presidential election shook many Americans to the core.

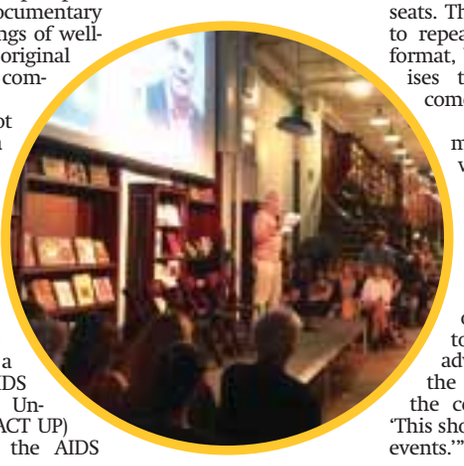
Molly Quinn did what she always does when things get tough: go to her job as director of public programming at Housing Works Bookstore Cafe, and talk to other creative types in the city.

"A lot of people feel hopeless and I did too, and this is what I do when I feel hopeless," she says about Art After Trump, a free six-hour marathon performance taking place Dec. 15, from 6 p.m. to midnight at the Housing Works Bookstore on Crosby Street. The evening will feature 150 performers with just two minutes to respond to the prompt: "As an artist, how are you reacting to this uncertain future?"

"What I wanted to do was to be with the people whose minds and hearts stimulate me and challenge me and comfort me," explains the 28-year-old Brooklyn resident.

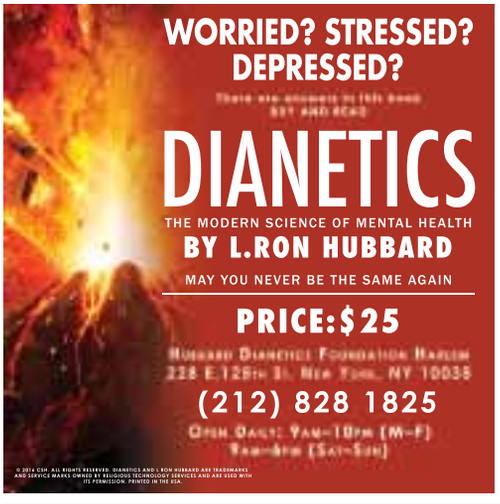
Quinn began planning the event "pretty much when I woke up" on Nov. 9 with fellow organizers and connected creatives in the city — at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Well Read Black Girl book club, art blog Hyperallergic, Lena Dunham's Lenny Letter and more. Together, they assembled the roster of performers, whose works will include poetry, music, film clips, photography, documentary footage, readings of well-known and original works, even comedy.

Though not necessarily a protest, the night likely will have moments of activism, especially given that Housing Works began in 1990 as a part of the AIDS Coalition To Unleash Power (ACT UP) that brought the AIDS crisis into the mainstream through nonviolent civic action. Most New Yorkers probably know its book and thrift stores, but to many low-income residents living with HIV/AIDS, Housing Works is a resource for medical care and other assistance — which is threatened by the likely repeal of the Affordable Care Act once Donald Trump takes office.



Just as she got way more responses than the 150 performers who will be taking the stage, nearly 10,000 people have RSVPed through the event's Facebook page for 300 seats. There are no plans to repeat this particular format, but Quinn promises there's more to come.

"This event is a meeting of people who may not all respond or protest or resist in the same way," all serving as a reminder of the importance of continuing to create during adversity. "From the very beginning, the conversation was, 'This should be a series of events.'"



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HOT PLATE

Laughing Dumplings at Carma East EVA KIS

'Very honest' dumplings

Dumplings have a couple of big things going against them in the age of Instagram, according to Anna Ho, co-owner of the new modern dim sum bar **Carma East** (507 E. Sixth St.). To people unfamiliar with the art and tradition of dumplings, they all look the same, and there's no way to know what's inside until you bite into them.

"Now restaurants can stay in business even though they're not very good because of Instagram," she laments in the tone of someone who's lost a favorite spot to the churn of the city. So when they were thinking of a concept to set Carma East apart, they thought, why not innovate the dumpling?

They started by making the dim sum experience more approachable, taking it out of Chinatown into the East Village,

Eva Kis eats her way through New York
eva.kis@metro.us

losing the carts and adding a bar serving wine and beer along with a list of about 10 sakes.

Ho describes their signature creation, dubbed the Laughing Dumpling, as "very honest." The traditional dough pocket has been transformed into a star-shaped bowl, open at the top for you to peruse all of the fresh ingredients and smell the intense flavors of their sauces. No spice is held back here for delicate western palates, just one of the ways the Carma team is challenging the expectation of bland, oily dishes in Chinese restaurants.

I didn't notice there wasn't any of my beloved dumpling dipping sauce until I'd popped the perfect bite of sauteed black pepper fish in my mouth. They're as juicy as the soup dumplings — the menu was created by the head chef at Taiwan's renowned xiao long bao chain Din Tai Fung — where unusual ingredients like foie gras and truffle make appearances. Or try one of their elevated takes on classics like kung pao chicken from the whimsical menu with headings like Comfort Food to Go with Other Comfort Food and Tapas to Get Drunk With. Carma East makes an easy case for starting your night with Chinese food, rather than ending with it.

YOUR WEEKEND STARTS NOW

SHOPPING

Block Party

Cross off what's left on your gift list while snagging freebies for yourself this Thursday in SoHo. Howard Street stores will stay open late and offer special deals, treats and entertainment for holiday shoppers like cocktails, art, an ugly sweater contest and spiked cider.
Dec. 15, 6-8 p.m., free

ARTS

"A Woman's Afterlife"

Somehow, Egyptians believed that men made babies; women just birthed them. They might have also believed women couldn't be reborn in the afterlife due to their inability to create new life. The latest exhibit joining "A Year of Yes: Celebrating Feminism at the Brooklyn Museum" displays 25 works that examine this peculiar practice.
Dec. 15, 200 Eastern Parkway, $16, brooklynmuseum.org

PARTY

Krampus Party

Everyone knows jolly old St. Nick. But if you're seeking a holiday icon that's slightly more morbid, get your jollies with the child-stealing, cloven-hooved Krampus this Friday at the Bell House, thanks to Morbid Anatomy. The event offers a costume contest, themed drinks, a sing-along and a Macabre Pinata. It's hosted by Ghoul A Go-Go with music by DJ Friese Undine.
Dec. 16, 8 p.m., 149 Seventh St., Brooklyn, $20, thebellhouseny.com

New Wave Xmas

We can't make the new year come any quicker, but how about going back in time instead? Escape your woes with the New Wave Xmas Party presented by Music Video Time Machine. Dance to the best of the '80s and '90s, from Duran Duran to Depeche Mode (and revisit some of the all-time best music videos from the golden era of MTV while you're at it). Thematic dress is encouraged!
Dec. 17, 11 p.m., Rough Trade NYC, 64 N. Ninth St., Brooklyn, $5-$10, roughtradenyc.com

FOOD

PROVIDED

Latke Festival

Sample contenders for NYC's best potato pancake this Monday and vote for your favorite from 20 restaurants like Burger and Lobster, Jacob's Pickles, Garden Court Cafe and last year's winner, Veselka (and, of course, there will be drinks and snacks, too).
Dec. 19, 6-9 p.m., Brooklyn Museum, 200 Eastern Parkway, $55-$120, latkefestival.com

COMEDY

Never Seen It

There needs to be a word for the anxious pleasure that comes from watching a friend watch a movie you love for the first time. Schadenfilm? Whatever it's called, it gets delightfully perverted at Union Hall when comedians take famous movies they've never seen, watch the start, and then write their own script for the climactic scenes. They then act it out onstage, complete with live musical scoring.
Dec. 17, 8 p.m., 702 Union St., Brooklyn, $8-$10, unionhallny.com

SEX

Sunday Night Talks

Let's talk about sex, baby. Better yet, let's listen to notable storytellers and comedians recount their sexual exploits onstage at Le Poisson Rouge during Sunday Night Sex Talks, which returns to NYC from L.A. after a hit show in September. This show's theme is "Best Laid Plans," hosted by creator Jessie Rosen.
Dec. 18, 8 p.m., Le Poisson Rouge, 158 Bleecker St., $15, lpr.com

DRAG

Voss Event's Drag Brunch

Move over, Mariah Carey, there are some new contenders for Christmas diva and they're lining up onstage this Sunday for two performances at the Highline Ballroom. Voss Event's Drag Brunch features some of the city's best female impersonators, including a few you'll recognize from "RuPaul's Drag Race." While they sing, you'll be diving into bottomless cocktails (with food available a la carte). VIPs get reserved seating and a photo with the cast.
Dec. 18, 12:30 & 2:30 p.m., 431 W. 16th St., $15-$69.95, highlineballroom.com

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Shop local: Find last minute favorites

Forget Amazon; these neighborhood gems have plenty to offer.

KATE MOONEY
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kate.mooney@metro.us

Christmas shopping doesn't have to be stressful. Sure, Amazon provides an easy one-two click, but it's nice when you can add a personalized touch by actually hand-picking a gift. Avoid the internet and chain retailers (which are sure to be mobbed this time of year) and stop in at one of these local boutiques, instead. From a Fort Greene lifestyle boutique to a chichi West Village dog shop, here's to shopping that you might actually enjoy this season.

For your pal who could use a little self-care

Jill Lindsey

370 Myrtle Ave.
Monday-Friday
11 a.m.-9 p.m.
Saturday and Sunday
9 a.m.- 9 p.m.
347-987-4538

Jill Lindsey has stocked her flagship shop with soothing, feel-good goods sourced from both local and international makers. Her signature all-natural JL body balm uses essential oils, nourishing to all skin types. Local Lathers BK bar soaps are categorized by neighborhood (Fort Greene: Ever Clean, with fir needle and rosewood). For the witchy men and women in your life, opt for the Sphinx and the Priestess ritual tarot candles, which include hand-written mantras to burn as manifestations — perfect for setting intentions for the new year.

For the dogs (or dog lovers)

Zoomies

434 Hudson St.
Monday-Saturday
11 a.m.-7 p.m.
Sunday
12 p.m.-6 p.m.
212-462-4480

Treat your favorite canine — or canine enthusiast — to a gift from this trendy West Village pet boutique. For flashy Fidos, there's the Zoomies Cabana reflective collar and leash, equally bringing the bling and the safety. Or, suit up your pup for the colder weather with a Zoomies NY Sport All-Weather coat. And don't forget about the actual treats, says co-owner Angelique M. Rufty-Graux: Zoomies all-natural dog biscuits, in flavors like New York Pizza and Fromages de Paris.

For the avid chef

Whisk NYC

231 Bedford Ave.
Monday- Saturday, 10 a.m.-8 p.m.
Sunday, 11 a.m.-7 p.m.
718-218-7230

The upscale cookware shop provides plenty of gadgets and goods for any cooking hobbyists. A creative kit, like the Craft Your Own Bitters from Hella Bitters, allows your foodie to play mad scientist in the kitchen, while a set of Brazilian Soapstone pots will come in handy this winter for simmering soups and stews, says manager Jessica Young. And for some real merriment, at Whisk's Flatiron location you can order custom-designed cookie cutters, which they make via their 3-D printer. Bring in your design to the shop or email the designer at 3D@whisknyc.com; expect at least a one-week turnaround.

ALL IMAGES PROVIDED

For the reader in your life

BookCourt

163 Court St.
Monday-Saturday, 9 a.m.-10 p.m.
Sunday, 10 a.m.-9 p.m.
718-875-3677

Stop in at this beloved independent neighborhood bookstore before it closes for good on Dec. 31 — after being in business 35 years. According to bookseller Jacob Schraer, you can't go wrong with one of the latest titles from acclaimed novelists Zadie Smith ("Swing Time"), Michael Chabon ("Moonglow") and Colson Whitehead ("Underground Railroad," winner of the National Book Award), currently topping the best-sellers lists and going for 30 percent off in store. For history buffs, check out Julie Scelfo's "The Women Who Made New York" a compelling read that highlights the female game changers of this city, from Zora Neale Hurston to Fran Lebowitz.

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Not all toys have to be neon

Candylab Pioneer car, **$41.99, candylabtoys.com**

That's one cool bird

Flavia Flamingo, **$24, anthropologie.com**

And you thought Jenga was tricky

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"Imaginarium" metro line train table, **$159.99, toysrus.com**

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For when the hoop's frozen over

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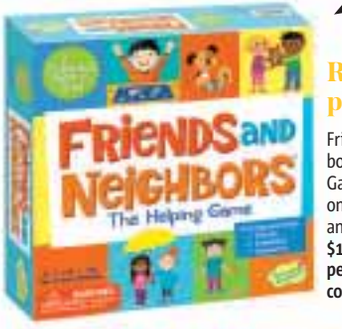

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WEEK 46 12/12-12/18

FORMAN MILLS

Snow doesn't stop the fun

Saranac Lake Winter Carnival ROB MADEO

Winter brings tons of festivals across the country.

Snow-covered mountains and frozen lakes remain part of the landscape well past New Year's in northern regions across the continent, and residents who live in chilly locales opt to venture out to enjoy the weather rather than hole up indoors. Festivals and carnivals featuring ice sculptures, sled dog races, sleigh rides and more give travelers a chance to join locals in fun annual traditions.

Plunge Fest

There are polar bear plunges — where people dive into frigid water in the middle of winter — all over the country, but Plungefest in Annapolis, Maryland, is the biggest of all. Attracting more than 25,000 plungers and spectators, this is the coolest way to raise money for charity. With proceeds benefitting Special Olympics Maryland, you've got a great excuse to take a dip in the Chesapeake Bay. If you're not into frostbite, there's also a carnival, giant sand sculptures and live music to keep you entertained.

Fur Rendezvous

Winter can run long in Anchorage, with extra months of snow and freezing temperatures. That's exactly why the first Fur Rendezvous was initiated back in 1935, to break up those long, cold winter months with sports, games and a torchlight parade. Today, "rondy" has grown into a 10-day celebration of Alaskan life, featuring men's snowshoe softball, a grand prix auto race, a "running of the reindeer" event, a native arts market and a "blanket toss" — a native Alaskan tradition in which a person is tossed from a blanket high into the air to scan the ocean for whales. The cornerstone of the festival is the world championship sled dog race, which attracts teams of sled dogs and mushers from all over the world.

Ouray Ice Climbing Festival

The biggest ice climbing festival in North America takes place every January in southwestern Colorado, in the small town of Ouray. Even if you have no interest in climbing, the park is a must-see with jaw-dropping walls of blue ice lining the rugged Uncompahgre Gorge. This year's Ouray Ice Climbing Festival events include climbing competitions, demonstrations, clinics, presentations, films, and a gear expo. Beginners can try ice climbing on the 30-foot practice wall, known by locals as the Kids' Wall.

Saranac Lake Winter Carnival

What began as an attempt to break up the monotony of winter in New York's Adirondack wilderness has evolved into the longest-running event of its kind in the eastern U.S. The Saranac Lake Winter Carnival boasts run-of-the-mill winter sports like nordic skiing and ice-skating, but also hosts off-the-wall competitions like ultimate arctic frisbee and a women's frying pan toss. Saranac Lake's annual themed parade (this year's is "celtic carnival") is also not to be missed, but perhaps the biggest draw is the famed ice palace—a mammoth structure made with anywhere from 1,000 to 3,000 ice blocks, weighing up to 800 pounds each.

Snowfest

Every spring for more than 30 years, the resorts on the north (and now west) side of Lake Tahoe in Nevada come together

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to throw a 10-day winter sports extravaganza. Far from childhood summer vacation memories on the lake, the North Lake Tahoe Snowfest features an icy plunge into the largest alpine lake in North America. Locals love the Tahoe Donner Ididarun, in which dogs pull covered sleds across a snow-covered course.

Insider tip:
Don't miss Rahlves Banzai Tour, a rip-roaring ski/boarder-cross event created by former Olympian Daron Rahlves.

Steamboat Springs Winter Carnival

The Steamboat Springs Winter Carnival in Colorado has a true Western flavor, with horses as the stars of the carnival's happenings along the town's main street. There are shovel races — participants sit on shovels pulled by horses — and an event in which skiers hang onto a lasso held by a cowboy on horseback. On the mountains outside town, there's everything from ski jumping competitions to slalom races. There's also a biathlon that involves athletes dressed in vintage fur trapper's clothing who ski and simultaneously shoot black powder muzzleloaders.

Insider tip:
Don't miss the opening ceremony with the "lighted man"—a skier who slaloms down a dark mountain with roman candles and rockets shooting from his costume.

St. Paul Winter Carnival **DARRIN JOHNSON**

St. Paul Winter Carnival

Minnesota claims the oldest and largest winter festival in the U.S. In 1885, a New York Times reporter suggested that St. Paul was too cold for human habitation, and to prove him wrong the city held its first festival the following year. The carnival is best known for the immense ice castle that's historically been its centerpiece; today, events also includes snow and ice sculptures, juried art shows, outdoor concerts, sled dog races and autonomous snowplow competitions, where inventors attempt to clear a snowy path with their robotic snowplows.

Whitefish Winter Carnival

Legend has it that Ullr, the Nordic god of snow, settled in northwest Montana, making his home on Big Mountain. But alas, there was no peace for Ullr and his queen, as they encountered a group of unruly yetis set upon kidnapping the queen. Luckily Ullr prevailed, and to pay homage to their winter king, the people of Whitefish created the Whitefish Winter Carnival, where they celebrate all things winter by parading down Main Street on skis, crafting ice sculptures and even skijoring (where skiers are towed behind horses through a race course). But beware: A band of rogue yetis remains, perpetrating pranks and intent on kidnapping the snow queen.
Insider tip:

It's free to spectate the ski joring, or better yet, enter the novice class and give it a try.

Frozen Dead Guy Day

Grandpa Bredo Morstoel may have died of a heart condition in 1989, but that doesn't stop him from living on (cryogenically, at least) in the artsy Rocky Mountain town of Nederland. Packed in 1,600 pounds of dry ice and kept cool at a steady 60 degrees, Grandpa Bredo is the inspiration behind the aptly named — if slightly morbid — Frozen Dead Guy Days event. Each winter, the Colorado town celebrates good ole gramps with coffin races, a parade of hearses, a frozen T-shirt contest, snow "beach" volleyball and other offbeat cold-weather activities.

Winterskol is the only time Aspen offers night skiing, thanks to torches and fireworks lighting up the evening sky.

For the expanded version, visit **metro.us**

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Manning's struggles haven't stopped Giants from contending

The Giants have a chance at the NFC East, and an inside path toward a wild card spot.

KRISTIAN DYER
@KristianRDyer
sports@metro.us

Surprisingly, it hasn't been Eli Manning, Odell Beckham Jr. or the Giants offense that has propelled the team into playoff position. GETTY IMAGES

Eli Manning need look no further than himself for his team's struggles in recent weeks. The New York Giants quarterback has struggled to protect the ball and move the chains. And yet the 9-4 Giants are poised to make the playoffs with Manning saying that he thinks the offense could be close to clicking.

Finally.

In Sunday's ugly yet important 10-7 win over the division-leading Dallas Cowboys, the Giants won despite Manning who had two first half fumbles as well as an interception. It was all part of a game where the offense struggled to run the ball or pass it. That's been a common theme this year and certainly has been the case in recent weeks.

Since a win at the Cleveland Browns three weeks ago where he had three touchdown passes and no interceptions, Manning has three touchdowns and three interceptions in his last two games. He had 14 interceptions in each of the last two seasons; so far with three games left Manning has already thrown 13 picks in 2016.

"We just got to understand, hey, I know I can play well, I know I can make the plays and get hot. Just have to stand in there and make the plays," Manning said. "I'm going to keep working and go in every week confident that I can go out there and have a great game."

He is still on pace to top 4,000 yards for what would be the sixth time in his career. But his numbers are down across the board.

If it weren't for the Giants ever-improving play on defense, then things could be a whole lot tougher in the land of Big Blue.

"That's what I'm trying to do, do my job, find completions, score points, move the ball," Manning said. "We got to clean some things up and I got to play better and smarter football."

With the win on Sunday night, the Giants have won seven of their last eight games.

Hip Arthritis Pain? Can Newest Medical Treatments Help Avoid Surgery?

If you suffer with painful hip arthritis and want medical options to surgery – science may have finally found the possible solution you've been looking for.

Here is why: Arthritis develops from failure of internal cells of the joint to produce Synovial Fluid which cushions the joint. Then, wear-and-tear over time can cause the joint to "dry out" and grind down the protective cartilage leading to pain, inflammation and immobility. Let it go too long and your only option may be complete surgical replacement of the hip.

But...researchers and doctors have discovered all-natural gel like medicines that are like "joint oil" and can be used to supplement the joint which is drying out... much like adding oil to an automobile. This all-natural gel is quite similar to the naturally occurring lubricating substances in the hip joint. When doctors precisely place this lubricating gel into your hip joint – always with the use of a advanced medical imaging - it is like putting oil on a rusty door hinge. It cushions the joint and can decrease pain and promote healing. This is not cortisone and has no side effects. For some, results can be dramatic and last for months - if not longer. *The earlier you treat the hip, the better chance it can help you.*

Know this: This is NOT a supplement you can buy over the counter or on the internet. This is a REAL medical treatment that must be given by a health care professional with advanced medical technology only.

And the great news is: You can find out if you are a candidate for this advanced medical procedure with our No-Obligation Risk-Free Hip Pain Screening at Downtown NYC Medical. To find out more and schedule your free screening appointment, simply call 800-879-7343

New York gold rush

The Knicks continue their West Coast trip with a visit to the Golden State Warriors on Thursday night, a 10:30 start on TNT. Kristaps Porzingis has been on a tear during the first three games of the trip, averaging just under 27 points per game. He had 34 in an overtime loss Tuesday in Phoenix. GETTY IMAGES

WHY THE GIANTS ARE LEGIT AND THE JETS SHOULD TANK

It's no cakewalk into the playoffs for the Giants, but they control their own destiny. GETTY IMAGES

OPINION

SID ROSENBERG
@SidRosenberg

Sunday night's divisional matchup was straight out of the movie "The Little Giants." Eli Manning and company manhandled the Dallas Cowboys in the swamps of Secaucus. It was a season-defining win for the Giants and makes them the only team in the league to have beaten the Cowboys this year. To put it lightly, the Giants have been the Cowboys kryptonite this season and all the credit can be given to Big Blue's defense.

A week after losing their best defensive player, Jason Pierre-Paul, to a sports hernia, the Giants' front seven took it right to arguably the best offensive line in football. Rookie defensive end Romeo Okwara was making things difficult for the Cowboys offensive front and constantly providing pressure, collapsing the pocket around Dak Prescott. But it was not only the Giants' front seven that stepped up. Big Blue's secondary had one their best games of the season in a big spot and will have to continue to do so moving forward if Giants want to get to the postseason.

Landon Collins and Janoris Jenkins have been playing the best football of their careers this season. Collins has really come into his own in his second season making some game changing plays in a number of games and providing a safety for his fellow defensive backs. Collins, who has patented his game after the late Sean Taylor, has shown flashes of greatness this year and moving forward could be a perennial All-Pro if he keeps it up. Jenkins, who signed a massive contract in the offseason, has been living up to the hype. Exhibit A was Sunday night when he had an interception and caused a fumble when he pried the ball from Dez Bryant's paws late in the fourth quarter to seal the deal for the G-Men.

The Giants will host the Detroit Lions next week and they have got to pick up where they left off Sunday night. I'll take the Giants in a nail-biter.

Now on the contrary, the Jets have been nothing but frustrating for fans this season and they finally decided to make a change, and surprisingly it paid off. Todd Bowles turned the reigns over to second-year quarterback Bryce Petty in San Francisco on Sunday and they walked away with an overtime win over the 49ers. It was an ugly win and I don't have much to say about the remaining games in the Jets' schedule because they honestly don't mean anything as they are mathematically eliminated.

Jets fans are hoping Gang Green can tank for these last couple of games and grab a top-five pick in next year's draft. That may not happen though as Todd Bowles will be trying to keep his job and last week's win tilts the scales in his favor. I expect the Jets to come out next week and surprise the Dolphins, who'll be without their franchise quarterback Ryan Tannehill.

The final stretch of the season for the Giants and the Jets could not be more opposite. There is already chatter about how this year's Giants squad has the characteristics of the 2011 Super Bowl Champion Giants and the Jets, well there are back at square one again. It's a story line New York football fans have become all too familiar with and doesn't look to be changing anytime soon.

Will shaking up lineup help solve Isles' issues?

The Islanders need something to change at this critical point during the season.

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@DenisGorman
sports@metro.us

The Islanders' top line has been producing very little as New York's struggles continue. GETTY IMAGES

For not the first time in the 2016-17 National Hockey League season, Jack Capuano stood behind the podium and uttered a threat.

The ultimatum was borne out of irritation from another night in which certain unnamed members of his New York Islanders underperformed.

"We have some guys who [don't] have an impact right now, " Capuano said after the Islanders' 4-2 loss to the Capitals Tuesday night at Barclays Center. The Islanders dropped to an Eastern Conference-worst 11-12-5. Only Vancouver (26), Arizona (25) and Colorado (23) have fewer points than the Islanders, who have 27.

"They have to find their way. It's [been] consistent here now. We've always been a type of team where we need all 20 guys going if we're going to have success," Capuano continued. "We're giving them ice time. We're trying to show as much video as we can. But at the same time, trying to stay positive with those individuals who are struggling. At some point maybe they best sit back and watch a game. We've done that in the past, too. We have some decisions we need to make.

Against the reigning Presidents' Trophy winners, the Islanders received one shot and two shot attempts from the quartet of Andrew Ladd, Ryan Strome, Jason Chimera and Anthony Beauvillier. It simply wasn't enough, especially as Washington finished with decided advantages in shots on goal (38-28) and attempted shots (67).

Entering Wednesday's home match against the Blackhawks, the Islanders' 44.8 Corsi For percentage is tied with Arizona for worst in the league, according to hockey-reference.com. And their 46.0 Fenwick For percentage is 29th in the league, ahead of only Arizona's 43.9 percent.

Historically, under Capuano, the Islanders philosophy has been to yield shots from the perimeter.

Through 28 games this season, Islander goaltenders are facing quality shots. Analytical website Corsica.hockey has Jaroslav Halak having faced 110 high-danger shots while Thomas Greiss has had 58 such shots fired his way. Of the 110 high danger shots Halak has faced, 22 went for goals. Greiss has allowed 12 goals on his 58 high danger shots.

But not all goals allowed are the fault of the goaltender. Take, for instance, Matt Niskanen's game-winning goal Tuesday night. Just 1:34 into the third period, the Capitals shutdown defenseman wired an unobstructed shot from the top of the left circle that beat Halak cleanly.On the play, however, all five Islander skaters were either behind the goal line or on the right side of the ice.

Essentially, Niskanen had ample time and space to take aim and fire a shot.

"If the winger can't get out, the center should switch," said Capuano, when asked to break down the mistakes on the game-deciding goal. "A weak side forward should not be coming over to the strong side forward. So on the D-to-D pass … walk right down Main Street. That's something we preach and teach. Breakdown. Our focus wasn't there on that play and cost us the game."

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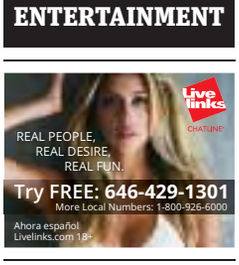

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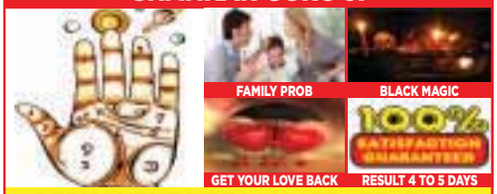

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4 Flows out
8 Arroyo
12 Go it alone
13 Plains Indian of Canada
14 Queen of the Misty Isles
16 Sgts. and such
17 Order for dinner
18 Rubbed the wrong way
19 Item in a poker pot
20 They pry but not jimmy (2 wds.)
22 Wingdings
24 Comply with
25 Mo. portions
26 Burrito morsel
28 Sitter's handful
31 Comic -- Mandel
34 Is situated
35 Where to do laps
36 Nile sun god
37 Zen riddles
38 Freud's daughter
39 Bona -- (genuine)
40 Type of pad
41 Annoying
42 Half a dangerous fly
43 Undersized
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47 Established
51 Pub extras (2 wds.)
55 Cow chow
56 Shake awake
57 Pasta-sauce brand
58 Get along
59 Peer Gynt creator
60 "Garfield" pooch
61 Sacked out
62 On its way
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64 Buy at auction

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11 Body passage
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20 Winged Victory
21 Pile up
23 Wind about
26 Onion-flavored roll
27 Counting-rhyme start
29 Friar
30 Join in a game
31 Knife handle
32 Name in elevators
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35 Triumphal outburst
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41 World War II pope
43 Copyright kin
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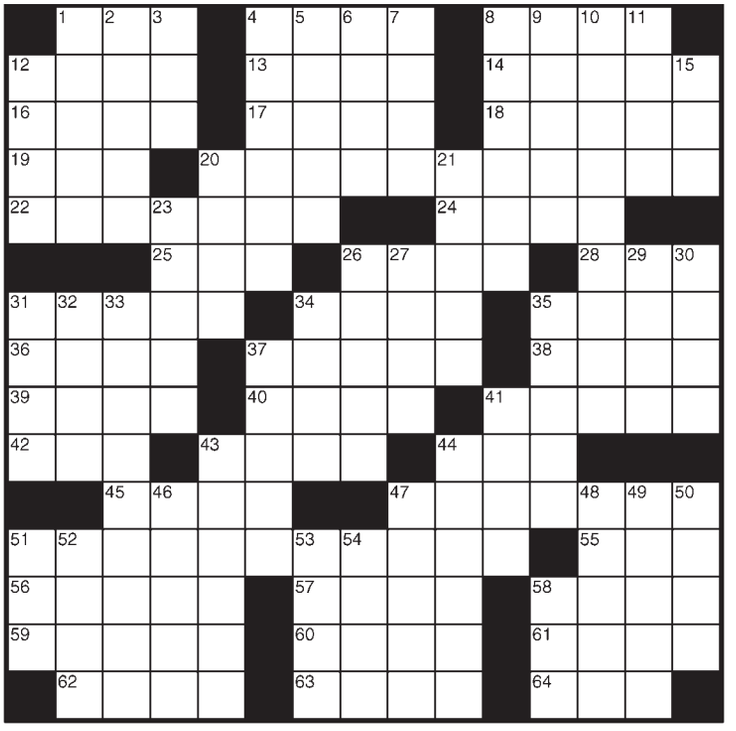
46 Ruhr Valley city
47 Tempus --
48 Abu --
49 Like a teacup
50 -- -in-the-wool
51 Part of TGIF
52 Thieves from
53 Globule
54 You've got it --!
58 Groovy



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easy

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hard

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		9	4	8	5			3

metro.us/horoscopes

Aries Problems will surface if you or someone you live with has been indulgent or impractical. Take action to turn things around in a positive manner.

Taurus Making alterations to your home to accommodate upcoming events will put added pressure on you and your bankbook. Don't be afraid to ask for assistance.

Gemini Money matters are best looked at carefully. You may think you have more to spend than you do. Look for sales, and budget your end-of-year expenses carefully.

Cancer Emotions will escalate when dealing with matters concerning children or your budget. Try to live within your means. Discuss your plans before you proceed.

Leo Secrets are best kept. Don't feel the need to make a last-minute decision just because someone else does. Protect your assets and position.

Virgo Plan to do something with children, or get together with a friend who shares similar interests. A shopping expedition will lead to bargains, but limit your expenses.

Libra Last-minute changes will lead to uncertainty and confusion. Making a fuss will cause bad feelings. Listen, observe and consider your options.

Scorpio Discuss your plans with someone you respect. Your options will expand because of the suggestions made. A change at home will allow you to pursue a venture.

Sagittarius You need to step up when it comes to long-gestating projects. If you face facts and answer questions, you will be able to move forward stress-free.

Capricorn Share your feelings, but don't let situations escalate to a point of no return. Stay calm, be straightforward and stick to what you know is within your means.

Aquarius A closer look at your bank statement will help ease your mind. Get your house in order, both literally and figuratively, before the end of the year.

Pisces Get together with someone you haven't seen for quite a while. Catching up will give you insight into new possibilities for an interesting new year. EUGENIA LAST

Yesterday's answers

S	N	O	B		A	S	P	C	A		A	W	L	S
N	O	V	A		D	I	A	L	S		M	O	U	E
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A	M	B	O		A	U	G	E	R		A	R	A	B
H	E	I	R		P	L	A	N	E		L	U	N	A
A	S	S	T		S	L	I	T	S		S	T	A	Y

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